

Message Text

SECRET

PAGE 01 AMMAN 01089 281623Z

47

ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00 /026 W

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O 281533Z FEB 76

FM AMEMBASSY AMMAN

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 7102

INFO AMEMBASSY JIDDA IMMEDIATE

S E C R E T AMMAN 1089

EXDIS

E.O.11652: GDS

TAGS: MASS,PFOR, JO, US, SA

SUBJECT: HAWK-VULCAN AIR DEFENSE FUNDING

REF: (A) STATE 048170, (B) STATE 049031, (C) JIDDA 1453

1. WHEN I SAW RIFAI MORNING FEB 28 ON OTHER SUBJECTS, I TOLD HIM THAT WE PLANNED TO BE IN CONTACT WITH SAUDIS TO ASCERTAIN THE DIMENSIONS OF THEIR DECISION. IN THE ABSENCE OF ANY CLEAR INDICATION FROM DEFENSE ABOUT PARA K AND BECAUSE WE HAD NOT TOLD JORDANIANS LOA WOULD TERMINATE,

I DID NOT RAISE THEIR PORTION OF MY INSTRUCTIONS WITH RIFAI (REFTEL C).

2. RIFAI PASSED ON TO ME THE FACT THAT HE AND KING HAD DISCUSSED THE ISSUE WITH SYRIANS FEB 27. ASAD'S REACTION WAS THAT JORDAN SHOULD DO ALL POSSIBLE TO CONTINUE WITH US PROGRAM. SAUDIS HAD MADE A MISTAKE IN CUTTING FUNDING, BUT JORDANIANS WOULD BE WELL ADVISED TO CONTINUE TO TRY TO WORK WITH THE US. IF IT FINALLY TURNED OUT THAT JORDAN HAD TO GO TO THE SOVIET UNION FOR AIR DEFENSE MISSILES BECAUSE OF THE SAUDI DECISION, JORDAN SHOULD

DO SO FOR THIS ONE LIMITED PROGRAM ONLY. JORDAN WOULD MAKE A SERIOUS MISTAKE IF IT CUTS ITS TIES WITH US ASSISTANCE OR DID ANYTHING WHICH INJURED ITS CAPACITY

SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 02 AMMAN 01089 281623Z

TO CONTINUE TO KEEP ON WITH THE US IN AN IMPORTANT

MILITARY SUPPLY RELATIONSHIP. IN THE EVENT JORDAN WAS REQUIRED BY THE SAUDI DECISION TO SEEK SOVIET MISSILES, JORDAN SHOULD ENDEAVOR TO EXPLAIN AS COMPLETELY AND CLEARLY AS POSSIBLE TO THE US. SYRIA WOULD HELP IN DOING THIS WHEREVER IT COULD.

3. IN ADDITION IF JORDAN FELT THAT OBTAINING SOVIET MISSILES THROUGH SYRIA FOR THIS PARTICULAR PROGRAM WOULD BE IN ITS INTERESTS, SYRIA WOULD BE READY TO HELP. JORDAN COULD ALSO TRAIN THEIR TROOPS IN SYRIA TO THE EXTENT POSSIBLE IN ORDER TO AVOID SENDING THEM TO THE SOVIET UNION OR ACCEPTING SOVIET TROOPS ON JORDANIAN TERRITORY. RIFAI TELLS ME THAT ASAD SAID IN ADDITION THAT 90 PLUS PERCENT OF ALL SYRIAN TRAINING TAKES PLACE IN SYRIA AND THAT JORDAN WAS WELCOME TO USE SUCH FACILITIES FOR A MISSILE AIR DEFENSE TRAINING PROGRAM IF THE SITUATION CAME TO THAT POINT.

4. IN THE COURSE OF THIS CONVERSATION, RIFAI TELLS ME THAT ABD AL-HALIM KHADDAM URGED ASAD TO TAKE A VERY TOUGH STAND AGAINST SAUDI ARABIA FOR ITS DECISION TO SUPPLY ONLY A LIMITED AMOUNT OF FUNDS FOR JORDAN AND ALSO BECAUSE SAUDIS HAD RECENTLY TAKEN A FIRMER ANTI-SYRIAN AND PRO-EGYPTIAN STAND. RIFAI SAID ASAD ASKED FOR HIS OWN OPINION. RIFAI SAID HE URGED A COOPERATIVE POLICY WITH SAUDI ARABIA, INDICATING THAT THERE MIGHT EVEN BE SOME ADVANTAGE IN USING SAUDI GENEROSITY TO EGYPT TO OBTAIN MORE SUPPORT FOR SYRIA AND JORDAN. SYRIA AND JORDAN WOULD BE MAKING A SERIOUS MISTAKE IF THEY ISOLATED SAUDIS. RIFAI SAID ASAD AGREED COMPLETELY WITH HIS POSITION ON THIS POINT.

5. RIFAI ASKED ME WHEN WE WOULD BE IN TOUCH WITH SAUDIS. ON BASIS OF REFTELS, I SAID I THOUGHT IT MIGHT BE AS EARLY AS TODAY. HE SAID THAT IN VIEW OF HIS AND THE KING'S DEPARTURE AROUND MIDNIGHT TONIGHT LOCAL TIME, HE WOULD APPRECIATE MY RELAYING ANY WORD WHICH US COULD PASS ON AS A RESULT OF OUR DISCUSSIONS WITH THE SAUDIS

SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 03 AMMAN 01089 281623Z

OVER SAUDI INTENTION ON THE JORDAN HAWK PROGRAM. I SAID I WOULD TRY MY BEST TO DO SO.

6. RECOMMEND DEPARTMENT PASS THIS MESSAGE TO DAMASCUS AND CAIRO.
PICKERING

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NNN

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